



Q&A

with LISA STENNES, GWYN RICE
& MOLLY SANTISTEVAN

The Team Advantage

Together Gwyn Rice, Lisa Stennes and Molly Santistevan make up The Team Advantage, a tight-knit group of top producing real estate professionals with more than 65 years of combined local experience. Specializing in the sales of luxury homes and coastal properties in North San Diego County and beyond, as well as relocation service, Lisa, Gwyn and Molly have continuously received awards for their sales and service. RIVIERA sat down with them at the Grand Del Mar to talk business.

Q: You ladies are known for leading the San Diego market since the early 90s. How do you do it?

Gwyn: Teamwork. No one person can be good at everything. Therefore, what really gives us the edge in the San Diego real estate market is the diversity of our backgrounds. As a team we bring not only experience, but also distinctive skill sets to the table; our ability to leverage those talents for the benefit of our clients is our hallmark.

Lisa: And of course, another huge part of our business model lies in our hands-on approach to working with our clients. Our clients are entrusting us to help manage the purchase or sale of a significant asset; they are hiring us as a team to guide them through the process, not to hand the project off once the ink is signed. Our mission is to stay engaged and educate throughout the entire home buying or selling process. We know that clients need to be confident they are making adept investment decisions with so much opportunity in the market right now.

Q: What kind of opportunity?

Molly: Well, right now in San Diego sellers are benefiting from six years of pent up demand from the buyers and investors who had moved to the sidelines. And now buyers are benefiting from historically low interest rates, yet carefully watching the bond markets for any potential shift. This real estate market offers an exciting time to get involved, from both sides.

Q: Working in San Diego since the early 90s you must have seen all aspects of the real estate market; it must be reassuring for clients to know how experienced you all are.

Lisa: We like to think so! We have been through a few "cycles" in our career history! With Gwyn's nearly 30 years of experience, her understanding of the residential market is unparalleled. My background in building and construction affords our clients with a unique perspective. Molly is particularly well-versed in negotiating short sales and foreclosures with lending institutions, and our team member Linda Laborde has a thorough knowledge of design, merchandising and marketing. Our complementary talents and experiences as a team really do allow us to provide a fair amount of insight for our clients, far more than if we were operating solo, as a single agent.

Q: Plus you've all been living in San Diego for so long, you have to be intimately familiar with the various neighborhoods.

Molly: Very true! It's also those ties to our families' activities, charities

and schools that keep us involved at a community level. Having in-depth knowledge of a particular area is important, but it is near impossible for an agent to service only one community. Why? We have coastal clients who want to move inland, and vice versa. And we represent clients from entry-level condos to high-end luxury properties. There is a lot of cross-marketing we do. And that's pretty helpful for our repeat clients and when it comes to providing relocation services.

Q: Relocation services?

Lisa: Oh, yes, we have been very fortunate to handle a lot of relocation clients. When San Diego businesses hire on new executives, we assist those families by providing community overviews, show them our schools, tour homes and landmarks. We evaluate their personal and family's needs in terms of lifestyle and home. Our goal is to help new hires feel as comfortable as possible in their new environment and warmly welcomed in the San Diego community.

Q: You have been honored with Prudential's Legend Award and for the past 18 years have been in the Chairman's Circle rank. What sets you apart?

Gwyn: You know, if we had to choose one thing, I would say it is what we call signature marketing. It isn't enough to create a classy flier and rely on Internet or Multiple Listing Service (MLS) exposure to sell a property. Instead we've always believed in the importance of applying an innovative approach to the marketing of our sellers' homes. I remember we had a home in the Rancho Santa Fe Covenant that was a very authentic Spanish Hacienda; so with sangria, tapas, and a flamenco guitarist we invited peers, business leaders, past clients and friends. It was a wonderful gathering — and a lot of relevant exposure for the home!

Molly: And with our new partnership with Michael Gregory Builders' properties in Rancho Santa Fe Farms, because they're all on the golf course, we did a whole 19th Hole-themed event, complete with Arnold Palmers and truffle popcorn!

Lisa: Or a sundown soirée for a stunning ocean view home. Yes, the consistent use of technology and signature marketing to reach out to our peers, personal spheres and past clients helps us showcase our clients' homes. That also helps us generate added exposure for our sellers, as well as reconnecting with a lot of special people within our community

Q: We've talked about your work for sellers; is there anything special that you do for buyers?

Gwyn: Helping our buyers find the perfect home to fit their current and future goals is very important to us. This is where our understanding of the different communities, schools, amenities, restaurants and activities is particularly vital to the satisfaction of our clients. We love sharing our knowledge of why North County is one of the best places to live in the nation. Plus, throughout the years we have developed a proven network of reliable vendors and service providers, from contractors and architects to dry cleaners and landscapers. This helps us make sure our clients have a successful transition into their new surroundings.

Q: Let's talk about your partnership with Michael Gregory Builders. How did that come about?

Molly: Well, it was really through a mutual effort and connections. We've had the pleasure of helping Michael Gregory Builders with the sale of seven of the last remaining lots in Rancho Santa Fe Farms, all with golf course frontage. Construction is now starting on six homes and it has been a fun journey and an excellent partnership for us. And in fact, I'm sorry to say that there is only one more lot still available.

Gwyn: Right! We are excited to be working with Mike Levesque

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and Greg Hastings, two highly respected building industry veterans, in their new partnership. They have brought out a truly unique opportunity for a buyer to purchase a custom estate in Rancho Santa Fe. I remember talking to one of the affiliates involved with Michael Gregory Builders and they said that there wasn't anyone more perfect than the three of us to represent them, which means so much coming from such a well-respected group. They have a lot of confidence in us, and I think what ultimately makes our partnership so successful is our team-oriented atmosphere. So far it's worked out wonderfully, and we're definitely looking forward to a long-lasting relationship with them and helping with their future endeavors. Michael Gregory Builders are rising stars in the San Diego home building market!

Q: Speaking of future endeavors, what do you think the impact will be for your clients having Prudential transition its name to Berkshire Hathaway Home Services?

Lisa: When I think of Berkshire Hathaway, the first thing that comes to mind is stability. It really is the gold standard when it comes to wealth preservation and growth. And because of that, it can only mean good things for our clients. They're in it for the long haul, and with that company's history comes a legacy of perseverance, expertise and consistency that really can't be matched by any other company.

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the **TEAM** advantage

for more information

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